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ABSTRACT

This practicum project implemented and evaluated an 8-month program designed to reduce negative behaviors among first- through fifth-grade students. Counseling referrals, student interviews, and faculty surveys indicated that the negative behaviors of gossip, name calling, and exclusion of fellow students from class and play activities were prevalent in the school. For the program, every class received 30 to 60 minutes per week of values development techniques. The values of tolerance and respect for human dignity and worth were encouraged through discussion of children's insights, sharing of ideas through artistic media, and cross-visitation of classes using videotapes of presentations by children. Staff and PTA members also collaborated to assist the school's economically disadvantaged and transient children whose basic needs were not being met. Post-intervention data revealed a reduction in counseling referrals for gossip, name calling, and exclusion. Student interviews and faculty surveys, however, indicated a need to further address the negative behaviors. (Contains 56 references.) (Author/EV)

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Reducing Negative Behaviors of Elementary School Students Through a Program Which Honors Values Discussions, the Arts, and Satisfies Children's Basic Needs

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by
Kathleen A. Kimball
Cluster 67

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A Practicum II Report Presented to
the Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University
1998

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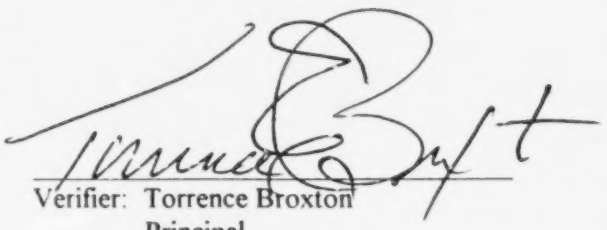
PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.



Verifier: Torrence Broxton
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November 10, 1998
Date

This practicum report was submitted by Kathleen A. Kimball under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

December 4, 1998
Date of Final Approval of Report

Setsuko Buckley
Setsuko Buckley, Ed.D., Adviser

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I wish to thank my daughter, Ashley and son-in-law, Robert for their complete and never ending support throughout the practicum process. I would also like to thank my principal, faculty, and staff for their wonderful cooperation, and my adviser, Dr. Setsuko Buckley for her patience and guidance.

I dedicate this work to my daughter, son-in-law, and their future children. I also dedicate it to my two cluster coordinators, Dr. Jeannie Harrell, now deceased, and Dr. Peggy Moreno, who have been powerful, positive role models in my life. Dr. Harrell taught me to truly live each day as thought it were my last and to greatly value the support of my family. Dr. Moreno taught me how to exemplify humility-with-dignity in leadership situations and made me laugh when I felt like crying. Without the encouragement of these people, I could never have completed this work.

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ABSTRACT

Reducing Negative Behaviors of Elementary School Students through a Program Which Honors Values Discussions, the Arts, and Satisfies Children's Basic Needs. Kimball, Kathleen A., 1998: Practicum II Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Character Education/Social Skills/Elementary School Students/Problem Solving.

The problem was that elementary school children were engaging in the negative behaviors of gossip, namecalling, and exclusion of fellow students from class and play activities. Counseling referrals, student interviews, and faculty surveys indicated that these behaviors were prevalent throughout the school.

For this practicum, the writer facilitated an 8-month program through which every 1st through 5th grade class received 30 to 60 minutes per week of values development techniques. The instruction gave consideration to developmental issues. The values of tolerance and respect for human worth and dignity were not imposed on the children but were encouraged to be accepted and shared through communication driven by questions, thoughtful discussions of the children's insights, sharing ideas through artistic mediums, and cross-visitation of classes using videotapes of children's presentations. Also, the writer collaborated with the P.T.A. Board members, faculty, and staff to quickly identify and assist the school's low socio-economic and transient children whose basic survival needs were not being met.

Analysis of the data revealed a reduction in counseling referrals for gossip, namecalling, and exclusion. Student interviews and faculty surveys, however, indicated a need to further address the negative behaviors.

Permission Statement

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December 11, 1998 — Date

Kathleen A. Kimball — Kathleen A. Kimball

Chapter I: Introduction

Description of Community

The community involved in this practicum was located in a well-known, suburban tourist area in the southeastern United States. The economy was based on tourism, the service industry, and money invested from retirees. Each year there were hundreds of thousands of visitors to the area. Many of the visitors returned to reside in the area because of the warm climate.

For those who returned, there were numerous jobs available. A multitude of these jobs related to tourism or the service industry and were for casual laborers such as waitresses, bartenders, and maids. A considerable number of jobs were also available for construction workers. The most secure positions, however, were found in government work.

With all the employment opportunities available, however, the community was still inundated with low socio-economic families in need of emergency services of all kinds. The local United Way agencies and the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services filled constant requests for food, medical help, and shelter. Local churches were also very active in finding temporary housing for families, although the majority of these families continued to be transient and live in motels.

Writer's Work Setting

The writer's work setting was a small elementary school centrally located in this well-known, suburban tourist area. The school housed kindergarten through fifth grade classes. According to race, 73% of the students were Caucasian, 23% were African American,

20% were Hispanic, 1% were Asian, and .5% were Native American. There were two classes of each grade with a total student enrollment of 344 students.

Although the student enrollment was relatively small for an elementary school, the student transient rate was high at 69%. To accommodate for this transience, many of the students and their families lived in motels. This high transient rate caused class enrollments to fluctuate between 20 to 30 students per class. There were 21 instructional staff and 15 additional school personnel who served this student population and their families. Three members of the instructional staff and five members of the additional school personnel were African American. All others were Caucasian. These employees were mutually supportive and were dedicated to working with the poor. This mutual support and dedication were essential to student success since over one-half the families of the children enrolled lived below the poverty line (Florida Department of Education, 1994).

Writer's Role

The writer, who had served as an educator for over 20 years, had three roles in the work setting: school guidance counselor, exceptional student education consultant, and facilitator for the school's ethics program. The role of school guidance counselor included individual, small group, classroom, and family counseling. This counseling role also included managing school-wide events, working as a member of a student success team for diagnosis and assessment of learning problems, serving as liaison to community agencies, and teaching parenting classes. In addition, the writer served as an exceptional student education consultant and a member of the school's exceptional student education staff to provide academic interventions for special education students who were enrolled

in regular classrooms. Another role of the writer was facilitator for the school's ethics program. This program was a school-wide effort to foster children's values development, especially in the areas of tolerance and respect for human worth and dignity.

The writer was also employed by the school district for two other related positions which were not carried out at the practicum site. One position was youth facilitator for district students who had been arrested and court ordered to attend anger management classes. The other was homebound teacher for K-12 students who were either too physically ill or emotionally disturbed to attend school on a regular campus. Both positions provided the writer with experience and insight into children's behavior and academic problems. Both positions also intensified the writer's view that development of positive peer relationships was critical to children's success in school and in life.

Chapter II: Study of the Problem

Problem Statement

The problem to be solved in this practicum was that elementary school children were engaging in the negative behaviors of gossip, namecalling, and exclusion of fellow students from class and play activities.

Problem Description

There was a situation that needed improvement. Three-hundred-forty-four elementary school students were choosing to be polite and friendly to some fellow students but unkind and disrespectful to others. The children were demonstrating this by engaging in negative behaviors such as gossip, namecalling, and exclusion of fellow students during class and play activities. The writer as school guidance counselor was in a unique position to be aware of these behaviors since she interacted weekly in various capacities with the total student population. Often when these behaviors occurred, the children came to the guidance office to report the incidences and to seek advice.

Problem Documentation

There were three sources which indicated the existence of the problem: faculty surveys, a daily counseling log, and student interviews. Faculty pre surveys submitted during the 1996-1997 school year indicated that 10 of 10 respondents had observed the problem. (See Table 1).

Table 1

Pre Survey to Determine Faculty Observations of Gossip, Namecalling, and Exclusion Among Students (n=10)

	No. Observed Negative Behaviors	
Grade	Yes	No
1	2	0
2	2	0
3	2	0
4	2	0
5	2	0

In addition, a daily counseling log was maintained by the writer for the 1996-1997 school year to document reported incidents. A total of 131 incidents was reported by students. Thirty-six incidents were reported by fifth graders, 37 by fourth graders, 32 by third graders, 14 by second graders, and 12 by first graders. The incident reports were made by the students in person to the guidance counselor. All reports were made verbally. There were no written reports or referral forms. (See Table 2).

Table 2

Reported Incidents to Counselor for Gossip, Namecalling, and Exclusion (n=131)

Grade	Incidents
1	12
2	14
3	32
4	37
5	36
Total	131

Finally 143 student interviews conducted during January of 1997 indicated that students in 1st through 5th grades had observed fellow students engaging in the negative behaviors. The one to three minute interviews were conducted in the classrooms during the scheduled classroom guidance sessions. Prior to the interviews, the writer explained to the children the meaning of each negative behavior. Gossip was defined as talking in a mean way about a child who was not present. Namecalling was explained as saying a cruel or ugly name to a child to his or her face. Exclusion was defined as leaving a child out during playtime who had asked to be included. Of the 143 students interviewed, 40 were fifth graders, 41 were fourth graders, 19 were third graders, 21 were second graders, and 22 were first graders.

Namecalling was the most widely observed of the three negative behaviors. Ninety-three children indicated having observed this behavior. Exclusion of fellow students during play activities was also prevalent since 80 students observed this behavior. There were 43 students who reported that gossip had taken place, while 19 students indicated that they had not observed any of the behaviors. Namecalling and exclusion were observed most frequently by fifth graders. Fourth graders reported the most gossip and, together with second graders, had the greatest number of students who did not observe any of the behaviors. All the first graders who were interviewed indicated that they had observed namecalling. (See Table 3).

Table 3

Pre Student Interviews to Determine Negative Behaviors (n=143)

		No. Observed Negative Behaviors		
Grade	Students	Gossip	Namecalling	Exclusion
1	22	0	22	16
2	21	5	7	10
3	19	7	14	9
4	41	18	22	21
5	40	13	28	24
Totals	143	43	93	80

Causative Analysis

A number of variables may have accounted for the incidences of negative behaviors among the students.

This writer observed that many children of low socioeconomic and transient families came to school hungry, tired, in need of medical attention, and inadequately dressed. These children often expressed negative behaviors toward their peers and were very limited in their positive peer relationships. The writer's discussions with these children reflected that the children were sensitive about their appearances and abilities and were worried about their home situations and future security.

The children were expected to come to school with the basic home training and resources to be socially successful. Many children did not come prepared, however. Since teaching positive behaviors had not been given much attention in comparison to teaching academic subjects, the children's social development was not a specific part of the curriculum.

The writer observed a social behavior among children in the school that negatively rated children who had somehow been identified as being undesirable. As school guidance counselor, the writer received many visits from children who were either overweight, shabby in appearance, had an unattractive physical attribute, or who had an obvious lack of ability in some area. These children complained that their peers had been negative in their behaviors toward them. Usually the children described the negative behaviors as being in the forms of namecalling, gossip, or exclusion from class and play activities.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A survey of current literature suggested not only that other professionals had written extensively about the problem, but also that this issue was a very strong area of concern.

Dede (1993) revealed that many students had negative peer interactions because of deprived, insecure home situations. Dede approached the topic from a unique discussion of leadership in which an absence of trust was identified as being the primary barrier to the development of motivation and positive aspiration. Furthermore, Cicchetti and Lynch (1993) noted in a careful examination of child neglect that maltreatment of children was highly correlated with poverty environments and with the children's subsequent inability to relate positively to peers.

Both journal and newspaper articles had addressed this problem and had provided support that the problem existed. Bolger, Patterson, Thompson, and Kupersmidt (1995) published a study linking children's peer problems with families' economic hardship. This study focused on long-term hardships within heterogeneous groups of children. Results indicated that children who were consistently poor had more peer and conduct problems at school than those children who either did not have to endure the economic hardship or only had to endure it for short periods of time.

Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, and Kato-Klebanov (1994) published a similar study which examined the effects of economic deprivation on the behavior of children.

Particular attention was given to length and timing of deprivation and to the influence of the neighborhood on children's cognitive development. Findings were that long poverty status affected the behavior of children and that prevalence of low income neighbors tended to increase the incidences of children's negative behaviors.

Levin (1987) reported research which revealed that conventional schooling practices could not be effective with children of poverty since these children did not have the resources to be successful in traditional ways. Levin explained that low academic achievement and high, school drop-out rates resulted in dismal futures for this population. Slavin, Madden, Dolan, Wasik, Ross, and Smith (1994) warned that low socioeconomic children were extremely inclined to academic and social failure.

Other researchers examined the problem nationwide and revealed causes of the problem that related specifically to the children's deprived home environments. Cicchetti and Lynch (1993) determined that parental neglect and maltreatment of children contributed to the children's lack of moral development and to maladaptive behavior. Rudolph, Hammen, and Burge (1995) found that insecure parental attachment contributed to children's decreased sociability with peers. Hamburg (1992) blamed poverty as being a profound factor in children's social failure and emotional distress. Comer (1996) explained that factors like the high divorce rate had deprived our children of parental support and positive role modeling.

Certain researchers had focused on this problem to the extent that it existed in the state of Florida. Keller (1997) documented that 40% of public school students in Florida were members of a minority group whose diverse cultural attitudes and

traditions were not addressed in many schools. Keller also documented that Florida had a transient rate of 30% and that one in four school-age children lived in poverty. Wright (1996) cited a report which ranked children in Florida 48 out of 50 states for well-being of children in the United States. Evans (1996) published data which gave evidence of deplorable home conditions among children in certain Florida counties.

Researchers found that other causes of the problem related specifically to the school environment. Coles (1996) complained that school systems had been focusing too much on educational reforms and not enough on children's moral development. Associated Press (1995) advised that teaching positive behaviors had not been an integral part of the curriculum in many schools. Fink (1996) emphasized the importance of nurturing all the school's relationships. Marzano (1994) warned that educators had not worked out the conflict with adult groups who had protested school values instruction. Kunerth (1996) explained that concerned parents were deeply worried because their children were receiving conflicting values messages. Scherer (1996) explained that children could no longer be protected from the negative influences of the media by controlling the flow of information coming to the children. Stipek, Feiler, Daniels, and Milburn (1995) discussed how careful examination had not been given to what positively and negatively affected motivational patterns in young children. Foster (1995) advised that school systems had not yet accepted the importance of teaching positive behaviors as well as teaching academic subjects.

Additional causes of the problem that related to the school environment stemmed from a social behavior among the students. Bowman (1994) warned that this behavior developed negatively and was harmful when sufficient attention was not given to appreciating diversity among students. Sergiovanni (1995) also warned that this system developed when schools did not insist on the consistent instruction of specific, positive behaviors. Aronson (1997) furthermore cautioned that when children were not educated as to the devastating effects teasing could have on their peers, they might be inclined to reject or give unrelentless negative attention to children who either had an undesirable physical attribute or appearance or had a learning disability. Furthermore, Barbour (1990) and Manning and Lucking (1990) revealed how use of these negative student behaviors was perpetuated when teachers inadvertently drew attention to the academic problems and learning disabilities of certain children in their classrooms.

Chapter III: Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

Goals and Expectations

The goal of this practicum was that students enrolled in 1st through 5th grades during the 1997-1998 school year would reduce their use of gossip, namecalling, and exclusion of fellow students from class and play activities.

Expected Outcomes

The following outcomes were projected for this practicum:

1. At the end of practicum implementation, there will be no more than 60 student-reported incidents, documented by the writer in counseling journals, of 1st through 5th grade students engaging in gossip, namecalling, and exclusion of fellow students from class and play activities. Of the 60 incidents, there will be no more than 10 incidents of gossip, 30 incidents of namecalling, and no more than 20 incidents of exclusion of fellow students from class and play activities.

2. At the end of practicum implementation, no more than 10 of 12 respondents to a post faculty survey will indicate that the respondents had observed the negative behaviors. (See Appendix A).

3. At the end of practicum implementation, student interviews conducted during classroom guidance sessions will indicate no more than 20 incidents of gossip, 50 incidents of namecalling, and 40 incidents of exclusion.

Measurement of Outcomes

For the first expected outcome, the writer reviewed the journals documenting the student reported incidents at the end of the practicum implementation period. The journals

would provide comparative data for incidents reported during the 1996-1997 school year versus incidents reported during the practicum implementation period.

The second expected outcome was measured by a written post survey form. The survey would be submitted by each faculty participant during the last week of practicum implementation. The results of the survey would be used to compare with the pre survey to determine whether or not faculty members had continued to observe students in 1st through 5th grades engaging in gossip, namecalling, and exclusion of fellow students from class and play activities.

The third expected outcome was measured by student interviews, conducted by the writer, at the end of practicum implementation. One to 3 minute individual interviews would take place in each of the 1st through 5th grade classes. (See Appendix B).

Description of Plans for Analyzing Results

The daily counseling journals kept by the writer to document all student reported incidents of negative behavior would be analyzed at the end of practicum implementation to determine whether or not the practicum outcome had been met.

The pre and post surveys developed by the writer to determine faculty observations of the identified negative behaviors would be compared at the end of practicum implementation to determine whether or not the outcome was met.

Student interviews were conducted at the end of the practicum implementation and compared with interviews conducted during January of 1997 to determine whether or not the outcome was met.

Chapter IV: Solution Strategy

Statement of Problem

The problem to be solved in this practicum was that elementary school children were engaging in the negative behaviors of gossip, namecalling, and exclusion of fellow students from class and play activities.

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

A review of the literature suggested a variety of approaches to solving this problem. Noddings (1995) assessed that in order for children to successfully care for others they must feel cared for themselves. Roesener (1995) studied the success of an economically-disadvantaged student population and reported how a school community could rise above serious problems by having all the students work together for the whole school's success rather than celebrating the individual success of some through competition.

Editors (1995a) warned that adults must carefully regard what children have to say before it is too late. Accomplishing this involved spending time with the children, carefully listening to their stories, and making strong efforts to restore the children's self-esteem.

Dede (1993) advised educators to both encourage the use of insight and foster the development of a vision which could be shared by followers instead of forcing a leadership which would produce no followers. King (1994) explained how to guide children's knowledge construction by using questions which could access children's prior experiences and knowledge to make new learning more meaningful.

Wagner (1996) emphasized the need for mutual respect in affecting any school change. Wagner also explained the importance, in teaching values clarification to children, of clearly defining and encouraging the desired behaviors. Etzioni (1996) advised

refraining from using schools as a series of lecture halls in which children were talked at and realized instead that schools should be places where everything that happened influenced the development of the children's social behavior.

McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, and McWhirter (1995) analyzed the notion of at risk youth and determined that ultimately it was a child's attitudes which determined if the child proceeded in a positive manner. McWhirter et al. also suggested that children needed to be guided to look for a deeper meaning and purpose in life. Gauld (1997) insisted that to deeply motivate youngsters educators must first help the youngsters develop their deeper selves.

Gronlund (1992) argued that adults could not successfully communicate with children and influence their thinking unless adults addressed the children at their developmental stages. Gronlund also warned that we must address the political issues that influence children.

Editors (1995b) encouraged the use of meaningful learning activities, learning that is driven by questions, development of relationships as being essential to the teaching-learning process, building school culture through positive communication, and the creation of school and community partnerships. Vondra (1996) presented ways to arrive at consensus in values discussions.

Graham and Hoehn (1995) proposed that we educate the children concerning the power their acceptance or rejection of peers could have on the peers' social adjustments. Batson, Polycarpou, Harmon-Jones, Imhoff, Mitchener, Bednar, Klein, and Highberger (1997), therefore, suggested the development of empathy as a way to improve intolerant

attitudes. Foltz-Gray (1996) encouraged children to learn to protect themselves by handling bullies through understanding the bullies' feelings and motivations.

Daloz, Keen, and Parks (1996) suggested the necessity for every child to become close to someone who inspires them and the importance of children understanding that everyone is a teacher. Pepler and Craig (1995) promoted observations of children's playground activity for the study of peer interactions. Pepler and Craig especially focused on observing children's aggressive behavior while promoting the value of observing children in natural play environments. Fullan (1996) discovered that when children are in the process of developing new values and beliefs the children must share ideas in many ways and use cross-visitation. Armstrong and Armstrong (1996) suggested the use of music in transforming children's attitudes and beliefs.

Comer (1996) taught that our American society cannot avoid the question of why many young people are not functioning well or this problem will extend to future generations and be very difficult to reverse. Comer insisted that Americans generate a human capital movement and give our children what they need to succeed.

Description of Selected Solution

The ideas cited and examined from the literature, especially the notions that pertained to both the values clarification in children and to the relationship between poverty environments and the development of negative behaviors, provided a strong basis for the selection of certain solutions. This practicum therefore attempted to reduce the incidences of negative behaviors by proceeding in the following ways:

This writer facilitated an 8-month program through which every 1st through 5th grade class received 30 to 60 minutes per week of values development techniques suggested in the literature review. The instruction considered developmental issues. Furthermore, the values of tolerance and respect for human worth and dignity were not imposed on the children but became accepted and shared through group bonding, communication driven by questions, thoughtful discussions of the children's insights, sharing ideas through artistic mediums, and cross-visitation of classes using videotapes. Special attention was given to developing an awareness in children of how gossip, namecalling, and exclusion of fellow students adversely affected students' self-esteem and academic achievement. The writer helped the students in each of the ten classes involved in practicum implementation get to know each other better and work closely together. Many stories and songs were presented to the children that increased their awareness and understanding of gossip, namecalling, and exclusion. Each time one of these three negative behaviors was addressed in a class session, the undesirable behavior then the desirable behavior were clearly defined by the students themselves using role playing and a scenario developed by either a student or by the writer. Often the students used past experiences as scenarios for their role playing. The writer strongly encouraged the children to creatively express their ideas and feelings about the three negative behaviors through artistic presentations that were comfortable to each of them. In addition once a month the students came in contact with a different exemplary adult who was invited to the school campus as an inspirational speaker.

Finally, this writer worked closely together with the school P.T.A. Board members and faculty and staff to quickly identify and assist the school's low socio-economic and transient children whose basic survival needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and medical needs were not being met. The funds for this student aid were provided by former fundraising efforts of the P.T.A. and of the Student Government Association.

Report of Action Taken

As soon as the practicum proposal was approved the writer devoted the first two weeks of implementation to arranging numerous meetings with the P.T.A. Board members, the principal, and the faculty members. The meetings were held to both verify procedures for filling children's needs requests applications and to provide an overview of the implementation. The writer met with the P.T.A. Board members as a group to explain the goal of the practicum and then met individually with each of the two P.T.A. presidents, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer to make certain everyone was in agreement with the procedures for filling the children's needs requests applications. At the P.T.A. Board meeting the writer was appointed member in charge of family intervention and advocacy. Then through the meetings with the individual Board members it was decided that the needs requests would be filled by both the writer and one of the presidents, depending on who was more available to quickly fill a request when it was submitted. In any event, however, the treasurer agreed to reimburse whoever made the requested purchase as soon as a receipt was presented and as long as the request was filled through a business that provided discounts to the school. Both the president's name and phone numbers and the

writer's name and phone numbers were published in the school newspaper to advertise the needs request service.

Next the writer met with the principal and with each of the faculty members involved in the implementation. The writer met with each person individually to glean their ideas, solicit their support, and discuss the purpose of the implementation based on the data gathered during the 1996-1997 school year from the faculty surveys, the daily counseling log, and the student interviews. The writer's subsequent reflections from the discussions with the principal and these faculty members proved to be timely and invaluable to the direction of the implementation just as it began. Because of these discussions the writer was reminded of a basic principle of educational psychology which otherwise would not have been taken into consideration. This was the heavily researched and substantiated notion that putting attention on negative behavior will only increase the negative behavior (Moreno, 1991). Therefore the writer was reminded to approach the implementation by placing attention on the positive ways of proceeding rather than attacking the negative behaviors and thereby giving them focus and increasing their strength.

By the end of the second week of implementation the writer had arranged times and locations of classroom activities for the ten classes involved and for the duration of the practicum. The teachers were very cooperative in scheduling the activities because they knew these scheduled times would afford them many opportunities to leave their classrooms and take care of personal business. They were also appreciative of any assistance in reducing their students' negative behaviors. The writer, however, encouraged

the teachers to remain in their classrooms if they were interested in observing the activities.

Also at this time and as an integral part of the implementation, the writer invited five, well-known professionals who were also community leaders to address the students involved in the practicum implementation and to inspire them with their personal success stories of overcoming difficult situations. Three of the five speakers were immediately scheduled and their times and dates recorded by the school's administrative assistant on the master plan in the front office. One of the speakers related that he would be changing jobs and needed to schedule his presentation only when he could confirm his starting date for the new position. The fifth speaker invited was so overwhelmed by her heavy workload that the writer did not believe this speaker would be able to accept the invitation within the implementation period. Consequently an alternate speaker was notified, immediately accepted, and scheduled a time and date to speak.

Interestingly throughout these first two weeks of practicum implementation there was an influx of counseling referrals from fourth grade students. These referrals were for namecalling and were all reported by students who were new to the school. The incidents which prompted the referrals were so disturbing that each of the two fourth grade teachers contacted the writer and asked for help in handling the namecalling. Although the writer had carefully planned to address the namecalling incidents during future practicum implementation activities, these particular referrals were of such concern to many people that the writer immediately devised and carried out a plan to provide group support and protection for the new students by inviting them to lunch in the guidance trailer every

Wednesday throughout the entire school year. When the plan was presented to the principal and faculty they were neither discouraging nor resistant to the idea. The principal merely insisted that the students dispose of all their trash at the guidance trailer rather than running the risk of accidentally littering the school grounds enroute back to the cafeteria to return their trays. And the teachers only requested that the students return to the cafeteria in time to line up with their own classes after lunch. Therefore the Wednesday lunches for the new students began immediately and maintained a certain procedure. Each week the new students in the 1st through 5th grade classes came to the trailer after being invited over the public address system during the Wednesday morning announcements. All the children came during their scheduled lunch times. At each session they introduced themselves to each other, one at a time and needed no help with relating to each other. They all smiled, laughed, were relaxed, and seemed to greatly enjoy being together in the trailer. And, although many of the children spoke of living in a hotel and of having attended several different schools, they were extremely well behaved, used gracious table manners, and were cheerful and friendly toward each other. The writer strongly encouraged the children to become friends and to discuss any problems or concerns they might have since they were new to the school. At the first Wednesday session two third grade girls helped facilitate bonding and opened communication for the group when they explained how they had had to protect each other from namecalling by members of their class during recess. Upon hearing this many of the other children in the trailer offered the girls their advice. The girls respectfully listened to and discussed all the advice but responded that they preferred, since they were close friends, to take care of each other.

This unusually open and honest discussion among the children during the first Wednesday lunch session established a level of trust from which 20-25 new students were able to draw comfort and work through their insecurities once a week.

Also in response to the fourth grade teachers' requests for help with namecalling the writer approached the two fourth grade classes separately in their own classrooms but proceeded similarly with each class. The writer was very careful to proceed so that no student became either defensive by being confronted and criticized or embarrassed by being identified as a namecalling victim. Because the writer had been personally acquainted with many of the fourth grade students for four years, it was possible to proceed very openly but sensitively with them since close bonds had already been established and maintained. This was attempted by speaking aloud to each child in the class, in front of their classmates, and relating to them what was unique and exemplary about them and why the writer was proud of them. When each student who was new to the school was addressed, the writer asked the children to relate what they noticed to be commendable about the new student while reminding the children that it takes time to really get to know someone. The writer then asked the children to raise their hands and volunteer to compliment a child in the class using a one sentence statement. Two students were chosen to compliment each child. This technique was very well received and produced positive reactions among the children.

The next three weeks were important in the practicum implementation for several reasons. First of all the classroom activities had to be initiated in all the 1st through 5th grade classes in ways that would inspire and enthuse the children to create powerful

presentations. Secondly a positive supportive atmosphere needed to be established in each classroom so that each child felt free to express his or her personal thoughts and ideas. Finally the writer had to provide all the students involved in practicum implementation with a detailed, serious overview to help them delve deeply into discussions of the negative behaviors which needed to be reduced. The writer had to present overviews, however, that were appropriate for the children's different developmental levels according to their grade in school. In effect the writer had to explain to the children, in words they could understand, how their interviews, many counseling referrals, and teacher surveys had informed the faculty that many of the students were being hurt by fellow students through gossip, namecalling, and exclusion of students from class and play activities, and how the children's help was needed to reduce the incidences of these problems.

As an opening exercise for each class, the children were asked to close their eyes, relax, and try to recall a time in their lives when they were treated very unkindly by someone. They were then asked to try to recall how badly this situation made them feel but to quickly think of what they could have done to either prevent the situation or protect themselves from being hurt. Finally, they were asked to fund a partner and role play their former uncomfortable situations and how they had thought to alter them.

All the children chose to role play situations involving peers rather than adults or family members. Repeatedly they chose to enact situations which involved telling an adult, ignoring the behavior, using humor to change the subject, or walking away from whomever had mistreated them. After the role playing the writer then asked the students to imagine how boys and girls in the school must feel when they were treated unkindly

through gossip, namecalling, or being excluded. The writer asked the students to think about this problem and be ready to discuss it.

The writer worked toward group bonding and sharing by teaching all the 1st through 5th grade classes a song about getting to know and appreciate each other. The song was quickly learned and well accepted by every class so that the writer was behooved to adopt this song as the theme song for the implementation. The children were also encouraged to dance while singing this song using a swaying motion as they locked arms or held hands and sang with each other.

By the sixth week of implementation the writer decided that additional time had to be scheduled with students involved in practicum implementation to offset time lost through field trips and other interruptions. The writer therefore decided to decline attendance at any on-campus or off-campus meetings or conferences that would interfere with the implementation. Furthermore, in response to the writer's perceived need for more scheduled time, the 80 minute lunch period for students was converted into a time for as many as 25 1st through 5th grade students per day to eat lunch in the guidance trailer. This gathering time was offered each day except Wednesdays to discuss any problems the students and their friends might be having with the negative behaviors outlined in the practicum. All students involved in the implementation were invited to take part in these lunches provided their focus was on addressing the negative behaviors. A few rules were established to organize this effort. Each child had to secure a sticker from the writer before 8:00 a.m. on the morning they wanted to attend lunch. The sticker allowed the child to leave the cafeteria and admitted him or her to the guidance trailer. Each child had

to return quietly to the cafeteria and line up with his or her class on time. All trash had to be disposed of at the trailer. If a child failed to adhere to any of the rules, he or she was allowed to return to the trailer for lunch only with permission from their classroom teacher. This additional implementation time was put into effect as soon as the procedures were communicated to the faculty and staff members.

Also during the sixth week of practicum implementation, the first scheduled speaker was presented to the students. He was a school psychologist who had recently been in private practice to provide assessment and therapy primarily for abusive persons. He was also a member of the county school board's Expulsion Committee which determined the fate of students charged with very serious on-campus offenses. The psychologist related to the children his struggle with a severe learning disability which had made it difficult for him to read or write. He explained to the children how his determination to succeed helped him learn to overcome his limitations and earn a doctorate in psychology degree. He taught them how to remain unemotional and calm when they were faced with a problem and how to think through the problem and analyze what to do next. He confided to them that he had been called names and ridiculed for his disabilities but that he knew what his detractors said was not true so he just ignored them. He advised the children that if they thought about the names they were being called they would realize those names were silly and did not apply to them at all. Finally he told the children that it was the strong support of his Sicilian family which gave him the encouragement he needed to persevere and that the children should rely on family support to help them too (Fillipi, 1997).

By the end of the second month the writer focused the implementation on exclusion. In regard to this focus the children in all implementation classes were advised that they would be included in a videotape which would involve introducing them individually to the entire school. For the videotape they would say their name, age, and state one interesting fact about themselves that they would like everyone to know. The children discussed how this project might help them get to know each other better and therefore be more accepting of each other. They then practiced making their presentations. The writer used the musical activities in Getting Along (Page, Haven, Abrams, and Rose, 1988) to improve the children's understanding of exclusion and to increase bonding. These activities were easily adapted to and appropriate for 1st through 5th graders. Primarily they were stories and accompanying songs depicting animals with interpersonal problems related to exclusion.

The children practiced their presentations for the school-wide video in which each child was to introduce himself or herself. The activities also involved guiding classes to generate ideas and develop presentations on exclusion. These presentations were to share ideas through hobbies, artwork, singing, dancing, and acting. The presentations were made to allow cross-visitation of classes. Insightful inspiring comments on exclusion were made by children and were read over the intercom during the morning and afternoon announcements.

The writer carefully guided the students to generate their own questions on and delve more deeply into discussions of exclusion. Role playing was also utilized here to enact situations in which children excluded each other through being bossy, rude, selfish, or

mean. The stories found in Page et al. (1988) were matched with these situations. The children who had been gathering in the guidance trailer for lunch began discussing their ideas about exclusion more openly during the class discussions. Also specific children were able to talk with each other at lunch in the trailer immediately following an uncomfortable incident rather than having the problem remain unresolved and extending it throughout the day in the classroom.

During the third month of implementation the second scheduled speaker addressed the students. She was a school social worker originally from Puerto Rico who had just applied for admission to a law school in Florida. The writer had requested this speaker to talk with all the children who were new to the school since they were communicating a strong need for coping skills in their new environment. The social worker spoke to the children about how to successfully adjust to new school situations and about ways to get to know each other. She also spoke frankly to these students about taking responsibility for getting themselves to school on time, since many of them were from transient families (Martin, 1997).

By this time the children had quickly and decisively prepared artistic presentations using the medium of their choice. They did this as soon as the writer gave them permission to organize themselves in small groups according to their interests. Too, the children demonstrated definite preferences, by grade level, for their methods of presentation. The first graders preferred reflecting on and responding to situations presented to them in stories. The second graders preferred to individually share their own personal experiences. The third graders enjoyed role-playing especially when they could use humor. The fourth

graders were also enthusiastic about role playing and about singing in small groups, while the fifth graders focused on writing skits.

Also during this time the writer had prepared all the students in the 1st through 5th grade classes to be introduced to each other through filming the first videotape. This videotaping could have been difficult and frustrating but it was enjoyable and seemingly effortless because of assistance received from the worksite's media specialist. The media specialist allowed all the videotaping to take place in the library during each class's scheduled library visit. The teachers had no objection to this and the principal was in support of it. He merely insisted, as a matter of good policy, that the videotapes only be shown "in-house," on the school site; otherwise, it would have been necessary to secure written parental permission for each child appearing in the videotapes to avoid any possible misunderstandings or controversies from the parents. For the introductory video the writer designated and rehearsed one child from each of the eight classes to introduce their own class. All the children, except for the first grade students who merely said "hello" and stated their names, introduced themselves by giving their name, age, and mentioning something interesting about themselves, i.e., that they liked sports or helping their mother clean or that they enjoyed reading, shopping, or playing with their friends. The media specialist did all the camera work while the writer guided all the children in and out of the media center. The quality of the videotaping was excellent while the children's introductions were clear, witty, and charming. This was gratifying to both the media specialist and the writer considering the large number of children from five different grade levels who were successfully videotaped on one day (Landfair and Kimball, 1998).

The third scheduled speaker, a police officer, was now presented to the students during the fourth month of implementation. The officer explained how she had overcome being hyper-sensitive and withdrawn as a child. She also coached the students on avoiding negative peer pressure and told them a powerful story about the potentially devastating effects of giving into it and not heeding obvious warnings of danger (Ellory, 1998). Her speech was given only to the intermediate grades since the content would have been overwhelming to the younger children. The second videotape was now completed. The artistic presentations on exclusion had been practiced and rehearsed numerous times. The writer had constantly encouraged the students to examine the issue of exclusion through honest but respectful discussions. These discussions had been generated by questions from the students themselves, their classroom teachers, and the writer. The insights expressed through this videotape (Kimball, 1998a) were both offered as messages from entire classes or skits by groups of children from different classes.

Each of the class presentations, which were from fifth, second, and third grade classes respectively, proposed the idea of accepting classmates as being like family members. The teacher and students in each class explained on camera how they carried out this notion on a daily basis. The powerful leadership of the classroom teachers was clearly apparent in each of these segments in that each teacher was obviously significant in developing the attitudes expressed by their students. The fifth grade class discussed all the ways a class is like a family and how they had used kickball and softball games as vehicles for learning how to accept and encourage each other rather than criticize and reject each other. Many of these children spoke of the necessity for a class to help each other and do things

together rather than competing with each other. They repeatedly commented on how encouraging certain students had resulted in the students' greatly improved performance in kickball and softball. The second grade class made an inspiring appeal for overcoming race discrimination and accepting each class member as a family member despite their cultural diversity. They focused their presentation on the life and teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his dream of all Americans being treated equally. The third grade class offered a very positive message of praise for the school's work to help the neighborhood. They voiced support for the notion of every class being like a family and appealed to all the school's students to help each other in times of need.

The skits for this video on exclusion were performed by fourth graders. Each skit included three to seven boys or girls. The scenarios were beautifully enacted and their message was single and clear - not to exclude anyone from play or class activities. The children demonstrated in each skit both the wrong way and the right way to proceed when a child asked to be included in an activity. These were attempts to clearly define and encourage the desired behaviors (Wagner, 1996).

During the fifth month of implementation the writer directed the students to begin examining namecalling. Appropriate musical activities were selected from county-recommended school guidance materials to improve the children's understanding of namecalling and to increase bonding. But when the writer suggested some of these activities to the classes, the children were either unresponsive or resistant. This development immediately caused the writer to realize that the students needed to use <u>their own</u> favorite music to be able to express their ideas and increase class bonding. When this

alternative way of proceeding was presented to the students in each class, the students were extremely animated and enthusiastic. The third, fourth, and fifth grade students responded by aggressively organizing themselves to produce their collections of currently popular music. The younger students instead suggested singing favorite songs with finger plays or songs chosen by their teachers. The writer both allowed the students to use their own music to develop artistic presentations on namecalling and addressed the issue through posing questions to the students to help them access their former experiences in this area. A recently published children's book, The Meanest Thing to Say (Cosby, 1997) was read to the students to assist them in accomplishing this. The children were obviously delighted by the book since several of them asked where they could purchase their own copies. What the writer perceived to be of value to many students was a very simple technique of merely saying "So?" (p. 20) to any namecalling taunts.

Unfortunately a most tragic situation occurred involving a member of the school's P.T.A. Board. This situation caused rescheduling the times and locations of the future Board meetings so that the writer did not foresee being able to attend. As an alternative way of checking to see if the applications for children's needs requests were being filled, the writer decided to increase the frequency of communication with the remaining board members.

At the end of the fifth month, before the writer was able to videotape the children's presentation on namecalling, serious problems within the fifth grade classes involving gossip developed. The problems intensified to such an extent that the principal and various classroom teachers became involved. Discussions during class sessions and lunch

gatherings turned from namecalling to gossip. Three different students involved in the situation refused to come to school. Some of the children involved in the crises were seeking advice and support from the writer before, during, and after school. Subsequently the writer decided to encourage these fifth grade students to channel their emotions into creating presentations on gossip and include these in the videotaping currently scheduled for only namecalling presentations. What resulted was an emotion packed video filled with powerful and inspiring student messages.

The video included students from the 1st through 5th grade classes. It involved 21 speeches of one minute or less, three separate classes singing songs as messages, and one skit. The speeches were all stated as personal opinions and offered as advice to fellow students. The writer guided the students by encouraging them to think about what caused namecalling and gossip and then what could be done to change the reactions to them and therefore reduce the incidences of these negative behaviors. In response the children advised their peers to seek consensus in their discussions by being more discriminating in choosing words and expressing thoughts. The children encouraged each other to consider the hurt that namecalling and gossip can produce and explained how to clearly communicate their feelings so that engaging in these behaviors would not be necessary. To avoid confrontation and the development of negative situations the students acknowledged the benefits of ignoring an attacker and removing oneself from an uncomfortable situation, of remaining focused on schoolwork, and refraining from becoming an instigator themselves, and of subscribing to effective problem solving techniques. The children appealed to their fellow students to become better acquainted with everyone in the school

and in their own classes so that they would not be isolated or exclusive in their friendships. The children also reminded each other that negative behaviors are often exhibited by children who are suffering and to therefore continue to be friendly and sympathetic regardless of any initial negative response to their friendliness. Finally students cautioned each other to be sensitive, kind, and loyal to each other on a daily basis so that when they needed help they could be assured of the caring and support of established friends. The three classes which related their messages in song form addressed the importance of focusing on work instead of play in school, the value of getting to know each other personally, and success and happiness they had experienced now that their class was in harmony. The skit portrayed by three fourth-grade boys exemplified how to convince peers to accept other members into their groups (Kimball, 1998b).

During the sixth month of implementation, immediately after the final videotape was completed, an incident occurred which illumined the students' understanding of the evils of namecalling. Three boys broke into the school and vandalized it. When one of the boys who had always been an exemplary student from a respected family was asked why he did this, he tearfully explained that he could not tolerate being called hurtful names anymore. But, interestingly, when the younger sister of this boy was asked how she would handle any ridicule or gossip that might result from this incident, she confidently responded that she would just say "So?" (Cosby, 1997). The discussions which ensued following the vandalism indicated to the writer that many students were disturbed by what had happened and saddened that their fellow students were involved but were determined to be supportive of the students.

The writer presented the fourth speaker to the students during the seventh month. The speaker had recently earned his doctorate in counseling degree and had become the director of a large rehabilitation center for recovering alcoholics. The director related to the children stories of how the insensitivity and disrespect of others can sometimes lead people to chemical dependency and, therefore, how important it is to be kind to each other (Croy, 1998).

On the same day, the writer presented ten other speakers to the 1st through 5th grade classes. These speakers were invited in honor of Career Week and not as part of the planned practicum implementation; however, they were each asked to relate in their speeches what problems or situations they had managed to overcome to attain success in their careers. The speakers included a newspaper editor, a defense attorney, a bank manager, a computer expert, a sales representative, a nurse, a college professor, a lifeguard, a restaurant owner, and a real estate agent. Also invited were a motel owner, a baker, an environmental engineer, and an electrician who had to decline because of schedule conflicts.

The week after Career Week the fifth scheduled speaker who had been invited to make a presentation during practicum implementation brought four high school students to explain how they had overcome serious academic and personal tragedies. This speaker who was committed to providing a motivational outreach program for elementary students had been an award-winning football coach and teacher in the county. He and the high school students advised the children to work very hard, not allow economic status to limit their goal achievement, avoid all negative influences, seek the advice of caring adults,

make wise thoughtful decisions, and maintain at least one reliable supportive relationship (Yocam, 1998). This valuable presentation was included in the third videotape.

The writer devoted the latter part of the sixth month and first half of the seventh month to delving into discussions of gossip with the third, fourth, and especially fifth grade students who had experienced trouble with this issue. The writer related to the students personal stories and examples from the media of how children ranging in ages from 10 through 18 had been so adversely affected by gossip that they had harmed someone and/or attempted to kill themselves. The third, fourth, and fifth grade students responded to these stories and examples with insightful discussions that examined their understanding of the need for good conduct, justice, law and order, mutual support, and self-respect.

Discussions of gossip were also approached with the first and second graders through the use of role playing and a series of popular school guidance books called Help Me Be Good (Berry, 1998). The gossip discussions with the young children focused on telling the truth and on talking nicely about other people.

Several practicum activities were completed within the last two months of implementation. The videotapes of students addressing the negative behaviors of gossip, namecalling, and exclusion were shown several times to each class individually during their scheduled practicum implementation sessions. Many children were very excited about seeing themselves on a videotape. In addition the three videotapes were presented school-wide on closed circuit television. The broadcast times were arranged with the media specialist and announced over the intercom in the front office. The writer also conducted

interviews with the 1st through 5th grade students, filled the children's last needs requests, and distributed the faculty post survey.

The final two weeks of practicum implementation were devoted to an examination of documented student reports of negative behaviors and faculty post surveys. The results of the implementation were presented to the faculty and administration at a faculty meeting.

Chapter V: Results

Results

The problem in this writer's work setting was that elementary school children were engaging in the negative behaviors of gossip, namecalling, and exclusion of fellow students from class and play activities. The solution strategy was to provide an 8-month program through which every 1st through 5th grade class would receive at least 30 to 60 minutes per week of values development techniques suggested in the literature review.

The instruction was to consider developmental issues. Furthermore the values of tolerance and respect for human worth and dignity were not imposed on the children but were encouraged to be accepted and shared through positive communication driven by questions, thoughtful discussions of the children's insights, and cross-visitation of classes through videotapes. Special attention was given to developing an awareness in children of how gossip, namecalling, and exclusion of fellow students could adversely affect students' self-esteem and academic achievement.

In addition, the students came in contact with different exemplary adults who were invited by the writer to the school campus as inspirational speakers. Five speakers addressed the students as part of practicum implementation. Ten other speakers advised the children in honor of Career Week but were asked to include practicum implementation issues.

Finally the writer worked closely together with the P.T.A. Board members and faculty and staff to quickly identify and assist the school's low socio-economic and transient children whose basic survival needs were not being met. The funds for this student aid were provided by former fundraising efforts of the P.T.A. and of the Student Government

Association. The goal of this practicum therefore was as follows: Students enrolled in 1st through 5th grades during the 1997-1998 school year would reduce their use of gossip, namecalling, and exclusion of fellow students from class and play activities.

The following outcomes were projected for this practicum:

1. At the end of practicum implementation, there will be no more than 60 student-reported incidents, documented by the writer in counseling journals, of 1st through 5th grade students engaged in gossip, namecalling, and exclusion of fellow students from class and play activities. Of the 60 incidents there will be no more than 10 incidents of gossip, 30 incidents of namecalling, and no more than 20 incidents of exclusion of fellow students from class and play activities.

This outcome was met. At the end of practicum implementation, there had been only 7 reported incidents of gossip, 15 incidents of namecalling, and 18 incidents of exclusion.

2. At the end of practicum implementation, no more than 10 of 12 respondents to a post-faculty survey will indicate that the respondents have observed the negative behaviors.

This outcome was met. Of the 10 surveys distributed 2 were not returned and the remaining 8 respondents indicated that they all had observed the negative behaviors.

3. At the end of practicum implementation, student interviews conducted during classroom guidance sessions will indicate no more than 20 incidents of gossip, 50 incidents of namecalling, and 40 incidents of exclusion.

This outcome was not met. Through the student interviews 78 incidents of gossip, 62 incidents of namecalling, and 48 incidents of exclusion were reported.

Outcome 1

Of the 7 incidents of gossip reported during practicum implementation as counseling referrals and documents by the writer in a journal, 6 involved girls and 1 involved boys. The majority of the incidents occurred in fifth grade which reported 5 incidents while the remaining 2 incidents were reported by fourth grade. Four of the 7 incidents involved children who were new to the school. Accusations of stealing were the cause of 2 of the incidents. Problems with interpersonal relationships were the cause of the other 5. One incident escalated to such an extent that it resulted in a serious confrontation for which 2 girls were arrested on the school campus. The majority of the counseling referrals for gossip, therefore, involved fifth grade girls who were new to the school and were experiencing relationship problems. (See Table 4).

Table 4

Counseling Referrals for Gossip (n=7)

Grade	Boys	Girls
1	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
4	1	1
5	0	5
Totals	1	6

Of the 15 incidents of namecalling reported during practicum implementation as counseling referrals, 6 involved girls and 9 involved boys. Seven of the incidents occurred in fifth grade, 5 in fourth grade, 2 in third grade, and 1 in first grade. Nine involved new students. Three of the incidents were reported by the same fourth grade girl and about a repeated issue. The majority of the referrals for namecalling, therefore, involved intermediate grade students who were new to the school. There were no significant results regarding gender differences. (See Table 5).

Table 5

Counseling Referrals for Namecalling (n=15)

Grade	Boys	Girls
1	1	0
2	0	0
3	0	2
4	4	1
5	4	3
Totals	9	6

Of the 18 incidents of exclusion reported during practicum implementation as counseling referrals, 15 involved girls and 3 involved boys. Ten of the incidents occurred in fourth grade, 3 incidents in fifth grade, 3 in second grade, 1 in third grade, and 1 in first grade. Nine of the incidents were reported by 4 separate girls who were repeating

complaints. Seven involved new students. All were complaints of being rejected by peers. The majority of the referrals for exclusion, therefore, involved fourth grade girls. Almost half of the referrals were from students who were new to the school. (See Table 6).

Table 6

Counseling Referrals for Exclusion (n=18)

Grade	Boys	Girls
1	0	1
2	0	3
3	1	0
4	2	8
5	0	3
Totals	3	15

Outcome 2

Although the outcome was met, every survey of the 8 surveys returned indicated that the respondent had observed at least 1 of the negative student behaviors during the 1997-1998 school year. However, seven of the respondents included a detailed comment which gave the writer not only a clarification of the response but also an understanding and sympathetic appreciation of the circumstances which promoted each response. (See Table 7).

Table 7

Post Survey to Determine Faculty Observations of Gossip, Namecalling, and Exclusion Among Students (n=10)

	No. Observed Negative Behaviors		
Grade	Yes	No	Did Not Respond
1	2	0	0
2	0	0	2
3	2	0	0
4	2	0	0
5	2	0	0

Outcome 3

The writer conducted 196 interviews of 1st through 5th grade students at the end of practicum implementation. In regard to the 62 incidents of namecalling reported during student interviews, 11 were from first grade, 19 were from second grade, 10 from third grade, 8 from fourth grade, and 14 from fifth grade. Due to the large number of interviews gathered by one interviewer, the numbers were determined by hand counts in each class rather than sessions with individual students.

Of the 48 incidents of exclusion reported during practicum implementation as student interviews, 8 were from first grade, 17 were from second grade, 5 from third grade, 6 from fourth grade, and 12 from fifth grade. These numbers were also determined by hand counts in each class. Finally, in regard to the 78 incidents of gossip reported during

practicum implementation as student interviews, 13 were from first grade, 24 were from second grade, 16 from third grade, 12 from fourth grade, and 13 from fifth grade. These numbers were gathered in the same manner using the same method as the first 2 sets of interviews.

In conducting the interviews the writer requested each class to both close their eyes so as not to be influenced by their peers' choices and to respond by indicating what they personally believed to be true rather than striving to please the writer or their teacher. Each class was conscientious in adhering to these requests. (See Table 8).

Table 8

Post Student Interviews to Determine Negative Behaviors (n=196)

		No. Observed Negative Behaviors		
Grade	Students	Gossip	Namecalling	Exclusion
1	24	13	11	8
2	45	24	19	17
3	39	16	10	5
4	47	12	8	6
5	41	13	14	12
Totals	196	78	62	48

Discussion

Several months prior to practicum implementation and in an effort to determine which peer problems were of greatest concern to the 1st through 5th grade students, the writer examined counseling referrals and was distraught to discover that the hurtful negative behaviors of gossip, namecalling, and exclusion of fellow students from class and play activities were prevalent among the children. Student interviews and faculty surveys further substantiated the existence of these behaviors. The writer therefore was determined to find methods to reduce the incidences of these negative behaviors and understand causes for such numerous expressions of intolerance among the children. An intensive literature review provided the writer with insight into these behaviors and ideas on how to reduce them. Subsequently, for the selected practicum solution, daily values discussions were held during scheduled classroom activities and lunch gatherings. Through these activities and gatherings and through the cross-visitation of classes accomplished with videotaped presentations counseling referrals for the negative behaviors were reduced. Gradually the children learned how to positively discuss their problems, listen to each other, and arrive at consensus in their discussions (Vondra, 1996). At these times they communicated their differences sensitively, developed empathy, and overcame intolerant attitudes (Batson et al., 1997). They learned to care for each other (Noddings, 1995) and intelligently search for their own answers. In observing the children during the daily lunch gatherings the writer was delighted to see that the children were having the type of conversations in these settings at school that a family would have around a dinner table at home (Comer, 1996). This was an unanticipated positive outcome of the practicum.

At the end of practicum implementation, an examination of counseling referrals revealed that the majority of referrals were for namecalling and exclusion and were reported by intermediate grade girls who were new to the school. These results provided a clear focus for continued work on reducing the negative behaviors, especially those behaviors directed toward new students.

The need for an additional focus was identified, however, when the results of the post student interviews conducted to determine the extent of the negative behaviors revealed that gossip was acknowledged to be the most prevalent negative behavior and that it was most frequently reported by second graders. These results indicated to the writer that although intensive attention was given to the study of gossip during the final months of implementation this attention served to increase awareness of gossip rather than reduce incidences of this behavior. The results further indicated to the writer that the issue of gossip was being examined by very young children and that a process was in motion through which gossip was being identified, acknowledged, and addressed, although it had not yet been understood enough to produce behavior changes.

In regard to the faculty members, all the respondents to the post faculty survey indicated that they had observed the negative student behaviors during the school year. However, because of the positive and explanatory nature of comments added to seven of the surveys, the writer believed that faculty responses would have been more favorable had the distributed surveys sought to measure a reduction in rather than an elimination of the negative behaviors. The writer also believed that although the faculty members were extremely cooperative in allowing the writer to meet with the 1st through 5th grade

students constantly throughout the school year, and although many of the faculty members participated personally in the videotaped presentations and readily submitted the children's needs requests applications, the practicum implementation should have focused more on collaboration (Fink, 1996). The writer believed in retrospect that if collaboration with the faculty had been more of a focus the goals of the practicum would have been a shared vision with faculty members rather than a leadership imposed on them (Dede, 1993).

Recommendations

There were five recommendations made for furthering this solution in the work setting:

1. Special attention should be given by each classroom teacher to students who are newly enrolled in a school, to strongly encourage their acceptance by fellow classmates.

2. Specific interventions applied in this study by classroom teachers who presented their leadership philosophies for reducing negative behaviors on videotape during practicum implementation should be promoted for further use.

3. Students enrolled in 1st through 5th grades should be encouraged to gather in a confined, safe, pleasant atmosphere during their scheduled lunch times to solve problems with classmates on the day that the problems occur. These gatherings could be facilitated by a counselor, administrator, or teacher.

4. During these lunch gatherings established students (who have been enrolled in the school for more than one year) should insist to their close friends, rather than argue or request, that new students be accepted and included in class and play activities by cheerfully but firmly including the new students without discussion.

5. The three videotapes produced for the practicum implementation should continue to be broadcast throughout the 1998-1999 school year and should remain at the disposal of the faculty and staff for in-house viewing.

Dissemination

The principal at the worksite was interested in both the practicum implementation and the practicum results. Thus, the writer will present the practicum report at the Florida Counseling Association's November 1998 conference in Orlando, Florida. The report will also be submitted in application for the Phi Delta Kappa Research Award presented annually to an educator in the local school district. Thus, the writer will submit the practicum report to the local superintendent of schools as a resource for the new values instruction since local school district administrators and community leaders have decided that values instruction will be part of the required lesson plans for this 68 school county. Finally, a summary of the practicum implementation will be published in the school newspaper. The summary will accentuate the crucial role of parent modeling in fostering positive values development in children.

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Appendix A

Faculty Survey of Negative Behaviors

Faculty Survey of Negative Behaviors

The purpose of this survey is to determine whether or not faculty members have observed students engaging in gossip, namecalling, and/or exclusion of fellow students from class and play activities.

Directions: Please underline each response you choose.

1. Are you:

   a) A primary grade teacher?
   b) An intermediate grade teacher?
   c) A special area teacher?

2. During this school year, did you observe any first, second, third, fourth, or fifth grade students engaging in negative behaviors such as gossiping, namecalling, or exclusion of fellow students during class and play activities?

   YES _____ NO _____

3. If you answered "YES" to Question 2, what was the grade level of the students you observed?

   a) First
   b) Second
   c) Third
   d) Fourth
   e) Fifth

4. If you answered "YES" to Question 2, what were the negative behaviors you observed?

   a) Gossiping
   b) Namecalling
   c) Exclusion of fellow students

Comments: _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix B

Student Interview Question Sheet to Determine Negative Behaviors

Student Interview Question Sheet to Determine Negative Behaviors

The following questions were asked of each 1st through 5th grade class during the pre and post interviews.

1. Have you noticed any students at the school talking in a mean way about a child who was not present? (Gossip)

   YES _____ NO _____

2. Has a fellow student here at school called you or called another child a cruel or ugly name to your face or to the other child's face? (Namecalling)

   YES _____ NO _____

3. Has anyone left you out or left a friend of yours out during class or playtime when you asked to be included? (Exclusion)

   YES _____ NO _____